



MEDIA RELEASE

Social Inclusion Board must do more than prepare policy documents

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Mr David Crosbie, CEO of the Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) has welcomed the announcement of the Rudd Government's new Social Inclusion Board, commended the appointment of a well respected and experienced group of advisors, but also issued a note of caution in relation to their ongoing role.

"If this new Social Inclusion Board is to have a meaningful impact on social inclusion, it needs to not only acknowledge the impact of mental illness on social exclusion, but also support measures that can show real improvement in the lives of Australians excluded from work, housing and other aspects of life through their experience mental illness," Mr Crosbie said.

"Hearing the voices of these people requires more than having service providers and other well meaning people engaged in the work of the Social Inclusion Board.

"The MHCA has long campaigned for more effective measures of both government performance in meeting the needs of people marginalised through their experience of mental illness, as well as improving real accountability for all levels of service provision.

"Many people struggle with the compartmentalisation of their needs – housing, employment, training, mental health, general health, alcohol and drug dependence – which means they are rarely given the support they need to engage meaningfully in our community. If the Social Inclusion Board can reposition people and their needs at the centre of government and service responses to social exclusion, it will be a major step forward for the Australian mental health sector and for the whole community," Mr Crosbie said.

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The Mental Health Council of Australia is the independent, national representative body of the mental health sector in Australia.
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